

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Western District of Texas

United States of America

v.

Blanca Emma CASTANEDA-Ramirez

CASE NUMBER: EP:19-M -08728

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of October 1, 2019 in the county of El Paso in the
Western District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

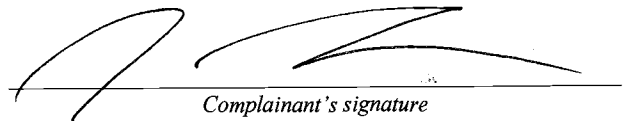
8:1324(a)(1)(A)(iii) and (a)(1)(B)(ii)

Offense Description

knowing and in reckless disregard of the fact that an alien has come to, entered, and remained in the United States in violation of law, conceals, harbors, and shields from detection, and attempts to conceal, harbor, and shield from detection, such alien in any place, including any building and any means of transportation.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See attached affidavit.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.


Complainant's signature

Jesus Garcia, HSI Special Agent

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 10/02/2019


Judge's signature

City and state: El Paso, Texas

Leon Schydlower, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

Oath Telephonically Sworn
 At 11:57 AM
 Fed.R.Crim.P. 4.1(b)(2)(A)

AFFIDAVIT

On October 1, 2019, at approximately 8:45 a.m., Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) El Paso Border Enforcement Security Taskforce (BEST) agents conducted a knock and talk at 13503 Lawkland, Horizon City, TX 79928. A female, later identified as Blanca Emma CASTANEDA-Ramirez, opened the door and granted agents consent to search the residence for illegal aliens (IAs).

BEST agents searched the residence and found four (4) individuals sleeping on air mattresses in the living room and several more individuals in the bedrooms. BEST agents identified themselves as immigration officers and questioned all the individuals as to their citizenship and right to be or remain in the United States. Six (6) subjects admitted to being citizens of Mexico and not in possession of any immigration documents that would allow them to enter, be in or remain in the U.S. legally. CASTANEDA-Ramirez presented her Employment Authorization Card to BEST agents. Two (2) other subjects found inside the residence were CASTANEDA-Ramirez's children and were U.S. Citizens. BEST agents placed under arrest the six (6) IAs and CASTANEDA-Ramirez and transported them to the El Paso HSI office for processing and investigation.

At approximately 10:30 a.m., BEST agents informed CASTANEDA-Ramirez of her Miranda Rights. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated she understood her rights and was willing to speak to agents without the presence of an attorney.

The below is an interview summary, it is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview. Communications by the parties in the interview were electronically recorded. The recording captures the actual words spoken.

BEST agents questioned CASTANEDA-Ramirez regarding the six (6) IAs found inside her residence. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated she has a brother in Mexico that made arrangements with a smuggler to be smuggled into the U.S. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated the smuggler contacted her via cellphone and asked her if she was going to pay the smuggling fees for her brother. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated she agreed to pay the smuggler \$3,000 U.S. Dollars to smuggle her brother into the U.S. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated the smuggler agreed to take her brother to her house on Lawkland once he was in the U.S.

CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated that on September 25, 2019, the smuggler called her and told her there were two (2) IAs outside her house that had just crossed into the U.S. illegally. The smuggler asked her to house and feed them for him as a favor. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated she agreed to do this because her brother was still with the smuggler in Mexico.

CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated that on September 29, 2019, the smuggler told her, via cellphone, that her brother was outside her house. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated when she went outside her house there were four (4) IAs and none of them were her brother. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated she complained to the smuggler because her brother was not in

the group. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated the smuggler told her to keep them at her house and that her brother was next to be smuggled into the U.S.

CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated that on September 30, 2019, the smuggler called her and told her there were two (2) IAs outside her house. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated she took them inside her house because the smuggler kept telling her that her brother was next to be smuggled into the U.S. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated later on in the night the smuggler called her and told her a subject was outside her house to take the first two (2) IAs that had arrived at her house. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated she let the two (2) IAs outside her house and the subject took them in an unknown vehicle.

CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated when the group of four (4) IAs arrived at her house she spoke to the smuggler regarding her brother. The smuggler told her that if she wanted her brother released in Mexico she had to pay \$1,000 U.S. dollars. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated she showed a picture of her brother to two (2) of the IAs from the group of four (4). CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated they recognized him and told her he was at the house in Mexico waiting to be smuggled into the U.S. The smuggler also told CASTANEDA-Ramirez to take care of the bodies in her house because in his alien smuggling organization he has people that can go to El Paso, TX and bring people to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. CASTANEDA-Ramirez stated she knew the people she was harboring and feeding were in the country illegally.

At approximately 12:31 p.m., BEST agents informed one of IAs, herein known as MATWIT 2, of his/her Miranda Rights. MATWIT2 stated he/she understood his/her rights and was willing to speak to agents without the presence of an attorney.

The below is an interview summary, it is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview. Communications by the parties in the interview were electronically recorded. The recording captures the actual words spoken.

MATWIT2 stated he/she is a citizen and national of Mexico and is in the U.S. illegally. MATWIT2 stated he/she crossed illegally into the U.S. on September 29, 2019. MATWIT2 was able to identify CASTANEDA-Ramirez as the person that housed him/her and fed him/her. MATWIT2 stated he/she made arrangements with an unknown smuggler to come into the U.S. illegally. MATWIT2 stated his/her final destination in the U.S. was Tennessee.

At approximately 1:33 p.m., BEST agents informed one of IAs, herein known as MATWIT1, of his/her Miranda Rights. MATWIT1 stated he/she understood his/her rights and was willing to speak to agents without the presence of an attorney.

The below is an interview summary, it is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview. Communications by the parties in the interview were electronically recorded. The recording captures the actual words spoken.

MATWIT1 stated he/she is a citizen and national of Mexico and is in the U.S. illegally. MATWIT1 stated he/she crossed illegally into the U.S. on September 29, 2019. MATWIT1 was able to identify CASTANEDA-Ramirez as the person that housed him/her and fed him/her.

MATWIT1 stated he/she made arrangements with an unknown smuggler to come into the U.S. illegally. MATWIT1 stated his/her final destination in the U.S. was California. MATWIT1 stated CASTANEDA-Ramirez showed him/her a picture of her brother. MATWIT1 stated he/she recognized him as being in the house in Mexico waiting to be smuggled into the U.S. MATWIT1 stated CASTANEDA-Ramirez told him/her the reason she took them in her house was because she was waiting for her brother.

An AUSA was apprised of the facts of the case and approved federal prosecution of CASTANEDA-Ramirez for 8 USC 1324. CASTANEDA-Ramirez was booked into the El Paso County Detention Facility pending criminal proceedings.

MATWIT1 and MATWIT2 were booked into the El Paso County Detention Facility for 18 USC 3144.

All remaining IAs were granted a voluntary return to Mexico.

Because this Affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause as set forth herein, I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation.